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BRANDON SANDERS

Compton's Finest

Keith Brown
Chris Lewis
Warren Wolf
Eric Wheeler

special guest
Jazzmeia Horn

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1. Softly, as in a Morning Sunrise 3:45
(S. Romberg / O. Hammerstein II)
(Bambalina Music Publ. Co. / Warner Bros Inc.) ASCAP

2. Compton's Finest 5:10
(B. Sanders) (Theswingman213) ASCAP

3. I Can't Help It 5:30
(S. Wonder / S. Greene) (Black Bull Music / Doll Face Music / Stone Diamond Music Corp. / Jobete Music Co.) ASCAP

4. Voyage 5:06
(K. Barron) (Wazuri Music Publ.) BMI

5. Body and Soul 4:54
(J. Green / E. Heyman / R. Sour)
(Quartet Music / Range Road Music / WC Music / Druropetal Music) ASCAP / BMI

6. Monk's Dream 6:07
(T. Monk) (Thelonious Music Corp.) BMI

7. In a Sentimental Mood 4:30
(D. Ellington) (Sony ATV Harmony) ASCAP

8. SJB 4:24
(B.Sanders) (Theswingman213) ASCAP

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One of the most appealing aspects of a recording, in my view, is whether it can pass the "multiple/repeated listening" test. In other words, is there enough musical substance present to sustain interest beyond the initial listening session. Drummer/bandleader Brandon Sanders and his talented assemblage of musicians pass this test with flying colors on his debut recording **Compton's Finest**. Produced by fellow Angeleno, drummer Willie Jones III, the recording highlights a wonderful exuberance and joy of swinging by Sanders and company.

The tunes selected provide ample space for creative musical statements from all members. Tenor saxophonist Chris Lewis, vibraphonist Warren Wolf, and pianist Keith Brown get things rolling right away with expressive solos on the opening tune "Softly, as in a Morning Sunrise," as Sanders and bassist Eric Wheeler provide an energetic, upbeat foundation.

"Compton's Finest," a minor blues, plants the band firmly in a medium tempo groove and allows everyone to demonstrate their blues roots. Bassist Wheeler also gets a chance to shine on this one. Kenny Barron's new standard "Voyage" is just that—a musical journey. We're treated to engaging solos by Brown, Wolf, and Lewis, followed by a tasty drum solo chorus by Sanders.

The featured vocalist on the session, Jazzmeia Horn, demonstrates her wonderful vocal skills on the group's interpretation of the Stevie Wonder–penned "I Can't Help It," which was made popular by Michael Jackson. Horn also sings beautifully on the classic Ellington standard "In a Sentimental Mood," done here with a relaxed bossa nova feel.

"Monk's Dream" gives the group an opportunity to dig into the "vibe" of Thelonious Monk, again featuring fine solos from Lewis, Wolf, Brown, and Wheeler, along with the ever-present swinging groove of Sanders. The classic evergreen standard "Body and Soul" puts the spotlight on tenor saxophonist Lewis, as he, Brown, and Wolf demonstrate their ballad interpretation skills. The final selection, the bluesy, funky "SJB," has a danceable groove reminiscent of Eddie Harris's "Listen Here." Definitely "feel good" music!

Again, drummer and bandleader Brandon Sanders, who may certainly be considered one of "compton's finest," has assembled a fantastic group of musicians who succeed in creating music which is moving, engaging, and merits repeated listening!

~ Lewis Nash (drummer, bandleader, educator)

Compton, California has acquired a name for being a city that is infested with crime, chaos, gang bangers, drugs, and drug dealers. However, I decided to call this album **Compton's Finest** because growing up in the 70's and the 80's in that area, despite the environment, I had some positive and inspiring experiences extended to me by some pretty wonderful people. Abel Sykes, the former President of Compton College, his wife Sylvia and their three lovely daughters, Dawn, Daphne, and Leslie, were instrumental in providing me with uplifting advice and encouragement. Dwight and Melanie Prince, who were themselves educators in the Compton United School District, were always reminding me of the importance of getting an education. Roy Roberts III, the director of The Boys and Girls Club, who was key in keeping me on track with education and sports. Stephanie and Larry McIntosh, a counselor and educator in the Compton United School District also had a tremendous influence on my upbringing as a kid. The list goes on and on but no one should believe all of the media hype as it relates to the City of Compton. There are some of the extraordinary gifts and talents that exist within that dynamic little city ...some of the finest!

I would like to thank my family and friends . They have put up with so much from me but they have never failed me when I needed them. I would like to thank those wonderful musicians who helped me make this album, Jazzmeia Horn, Keith Brown, Eric Wheeler, Chris Lewis and Warren Wolf. I can't thank them enough. Shout out to Willie Jones III for his invaluable help producing the record. His wisdom and expertise are just impeccable. I would like to thank Barney Fields for believing in me and my music enough to put it out on one of the most respected labels in the music business, Savant. Our conversations about the music business have been informative and inspiring. Finally, I must thank God who has brought me from a mighty long way!

~ Brandon Sanders

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Produced by **Willie Jones III**
Executive Producer: **Barney Fields**
Engineered & Mixed by **Aaron Nevezie**
Recorded at The Bunker Studio,
Brooklyn, NY on February 18 & 20, 2023
Mastered by **David Darlington** at
Bass Hit Recording, New York, NY
Cover & disc photos by **Jaime Milner**
Other photos by **Eva Kapanadze**
Graphic Design by **İrem Ela Yıldızeli**

BRANDON SANDERS - Drums
KEITH BROWN - Piano
CHRIS LEWIS - Tenor Saxophone
WARREN WOLF - Vibraphone
ERIC WHEELER - Bass
JAZZMEIA HORN - Vocals (Tracks 3 & 7)

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